

he bought two years ago, went to Metro-media. Wolper himself received 69,551 shares of the combine and retains control over his films as a vice president.

A graduate of New York's P.S. 6, Wolper attended Drake University and the University of Southern California and spent his summers as a waiter in the Catskills. Then, when he was 20, he acquired a partner, Jim Harris (now of Harris-Kubrick Pictures), borrowed \$10,000 and started selling TV film shorts. "I used to be out on the road for three months at a time," he said. "It was a lonely, miserable life." Certainly it was a far cry from his Georgian house in Holmby Hills which he shares with his wife, former starlet Margaret Dawn, two sons, a Siberian husky, and two poodles.

By 1958, he was able to form his own company, Wolper Productions. He also got his first taste of the networks' ostrich-like policy against the work of independent filmmakers. "It's like saying

NEW-TV, the Metromedia station in New York, on Nov. 22.

Wolper's films on President Kennedy—the two television documentaries and the feature-length "Four Days in November" which ran briefly in movie houses—are typical examples of the difference between Wolper's filmmaking techniques and those of other documentarists. Unlike such firms as Robert Drew Associates ("The Chair," "Letter From Vietnam"), who use a *cinéma vérité* technique of shooting entirely on scene, Wolper relies heavily on patching together old pieces of footage for dramatic effect. Some reviewers have criticized him on the ground that the technique is timeworn, but Wolper defends it.

**Technique:** "I created a service," he said. "I synthesized those four days. When people want to show their children what happened, I'm going to get calls from them—not NBC, where they have it on 900 hours of tape, not Paramount News which has 4 million feet."

Still, the Wolper technique is limited by the available amount of film on a subject. "There's an old story around here," he said. "Everybody told me, 'Why not do a show on gangsters in the '30s?' I'll tell you why. There's a shot of Al Capone with his hat over his face. There's a shot of another guy with his hat over his face. I've got about 50 shots of gangsters in the '30s with their hats over their faces."

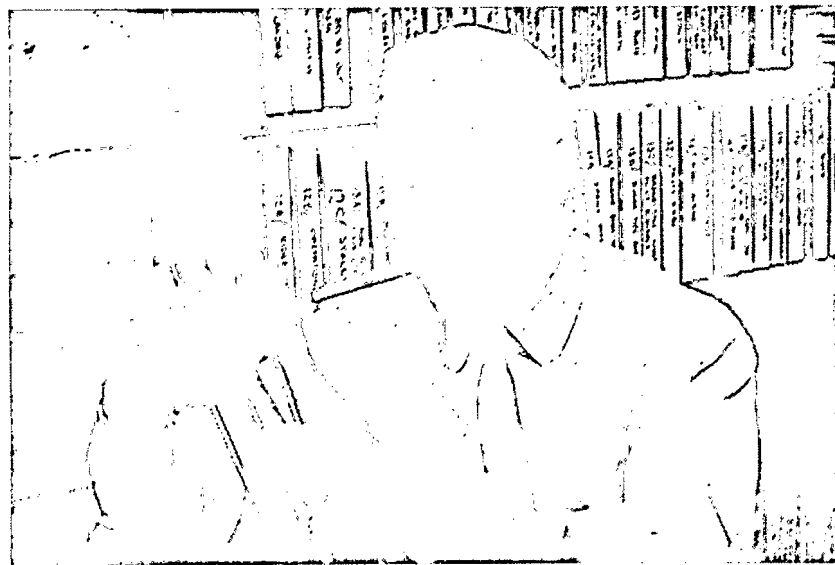
But if Wolper feels pinched by the lack of subject matter for his films, he isn't showing it. He has just made a six-picture deal with United Artists, has recently sold fifteen more specials, is branching out into pay and educational TV ("What more perfect field for a documentary producer dealing in history?"), and has been working all during the Presidential campaign on "The Making of the President 1964." As Theodore H. White researched the book, Wolper had two crews following each of the candidates, with one crew alternating between Miller and Humphrey. The film will be released in the fall of 1965.

**The Story:** With a puff of Panetela Wolper spoke of his own interest in history—an interest that has rewarded him well. "I enjoy following the story of something like the election campaign," he said. "Things happen every day, like a mystery. You can't beat that story." The reception his films get shows that these instincts put him on a popular wave length, but already he may be slipping into the mire of commercialism.

Currently, Wolper plans three fall series. One, called "Stop the Camera," will have contestants identify cities from newsreels. Another soporific, "Miss U.S. TV," will be a weekly beauty contest. "We report and entertain," said Wolper. "We don't just report."

## Young King David

The young man padding around the large office on Sunset Strip in slippers looks like the stereotype of the fireball Hollywood flack. A monogram decorates the shirt bought at Sy Devore's fashionable haberdashery; a small onyx ring glitters on his right pinkie; and from his round face protrudes a large Bock Pantela cigar. But David Wolper is no



Newsweek—Bob Grosh

Wolper: "We report and entertain. We don't just report"

press agent. At 35, he is by all odds America's most successful producer of film documentaries, the man who last May won four Emmy awards for "The Making of the President 1960."

"History, that's my business," says Wolper. Few men have made history pay so well. Since he broke into the infant field of television in 1949 by peddling short subjects station-to-station, he has sold more than \$10 million worth of films for television, has bought enough Los Angeles real estate to make his personal land holdings worth some \$10 million, and has built a production company worth \$3.6 million, which he sold last month to Metromedia, Inc., just so he could get the money to "carry out expansion and diversification plans." All of Wolper's 200 employees, plus such companies as Wolper Television Sales, Inc., and Paramount News, which

nobody can paint an art piece but one painter," says Wolper. "If you don't work for NBC or CBS, you're dead."

Of the three networks, only ABC has relented on its policy, broadcasting Wolper's "The Making of the President 1960." "ABC has what I consider the best attitude," says Wolper. "They consider each case on its merit." ABC has already contracted for six Wolper specials this year, including "The Feminine Mystique," based on Betty Friedan's indictment of American housewives, which will be shown next spring.

**Revenge:** However successful CBS and NBC have been in keeping Wolper's shows off their networks, the producer got his revenge at the Democratic convention. His tribute to President Kennedy, "1,000 Days," was aired on all three networks at once to thunderous applause. The film will be rerun by